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# How Consumers Read and Use Newspaper Advertising

*Results From A National Survey*

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# HOW CONSUMERS READ AND USE NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING:

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AN UPDATE ON NEWSPAPER READERSHIP AND CONTENT

## PREFACE

In October 1987, the Newspaper Advertising Bureau conducted the latest in a series of nationwide studies of newspaper readership and content. This study was sponsored by the Readership Task Force of the Future of Advertising Project. The field work for the survey, data processing, and tabulations were executed by the Response Analysis Corporation of Princeton, NJ. Interviewing was balanced across days of the week, Tuesdays-Saturdays; in all, interviews were completed with one adult member within a stratified probability sample of 2,049 households.

Two versions of the questionnaire were used in the interview to cover a wide range of topics, e.g., newspaper buying patterns; reading of daily newspapers and television viewing in three day parts; exposure to other news media; readers' content preferences and reading behavior (daily and Sunday); ratings of various dimensions of newspaper performance and utility; and detailed demographic information. Some of the items were repeated from earlier studies in order to monitor trends; others were developed to reflect new topics or issues of relevance to the newspaper business.

During the interview, readers of yesterday's daily newspaper were taken through a copy of it and asked about pages opened to and looked at from among a sample of six randomly selected spreads (12 pages). The sampled pages were coded for content and format, e.g., predominant editorial content or section, location in the paper, balance of editorial to ad content, presence of color, etc. Certain attributes of the newspaper read by each reader were also coded, e.g., circulation size, broadsheet or tabloid, publication cycle, number of pages, etc. The survey data have been weighted to take account of sampling design considerations and to adjust for variations in response among certain demographic segments of the adult population.

The results of this survey are presented in a series of reports, dealing with circulation, newspaper reading habits, ratings of the newspaper, the Sunday newspaper, newspapers as an advertising medium, and cable and VCR incidence and use. A separate technical report, prepared by Response Analysis, with details on sampling, field work, and weighting procedures as well as copies of the questionnaires used in the study, is also available.

The project was directed by Albert E. Gollin of the Bureau's Research Department. This report was prepared by Charles Lehman.

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# HIGHLIGHTS

Personal interviews conducted in October 1987 with regular and occasional newspaper readers show that:

- The newspaper is a unique, action-oriented advertising medium. Seven out of ten (71%) agree that, "The paper helps me to decide where to shop and buy." Among women, the principal buying agents in most households, eight out of ten (79%) agree that they use the newspaper as a shopping and buying guide.

- When respondents were asked to rate the relative importance to themselves of TV and newspapers in their roles as consumer and shopper, 65% called newspapers more important, compared with 15% who chose TV. Among women the margin in favor of the newspaper was 72% to 12%.

- On an average weekday, 67% of all the newspaper pages in readers' hands will be opened, thus providing the opportunity for advertising exposure. Regardless of the reader's age, household income or level of education, at least 60% of the pages are opened.

- Themed editorial sections in the daily newspaper give advertisers the opportunity to reach a number of specialized audiences within the overall audience. The relevant measure for many advertisers is not the total number of people reached but the number of prime prospects.

- While the proportion of pages opened tends to decline as newspapers grow fatter, readers of the fattest newspapers open to many more pages than the thinnest newspapers contain. This is because the typical newspaper reader has many interests.

- Two thirds (67%) of the pages on which ROP display advertising appears are opened--a figure that is identical for pages containing only editorial material.

- A card-sorting task measuring the kinds of newspaper items usually read indicates that women are more likely to read supermarket ads, store ads for clothing and movie ads than they are to read the average news story or feature.

- Overall, 72% of Sunday newspaper readers read special advertising inserts in the Sunday paper. Among women, 57% report regular reading of inserts and an additional 24% say that they read inserts "now and then".

- More than half of the sample (56%) say that they have clipped coupons from a newspaper within the past three months or so. As expected, coupon clipping is more common among women, but 40% of the men also report clipping coupons.

- Newspaper classified advertising is a special marketplace, attracting millions of readers on an average weekday or Sunday. Classified is especially important to young adults who are most likely to be active prospects for jobs, housing and cars.

- Two thirds of those reporting readership of classified over the past week were purposeful readers who were "looking specifically for a certain kind of ad". Earlier research has shown that "accidental" classified readers and browsers also generate business for classified advertisers.

# HOW CONSUMERS READ AND USE NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

## The Newspaper as a Shopping and Buying Guide

Seven out of ten newspaper readers[1] agree with the statement that, "The paper helps me to decide where to shop and buy." Women are more positive--about eight out of ten (79%) recognize the newspaper's value as a shopping and buying guide, compared with 63% for men. The difference in the proportion who agree "strongly" is even more marked--26% for men vs. 44% for women.[2] These male-female differences presumably reflect the fact that women tend to shop for and buy a greater variety of items on a more frequent basis (Table 1).

In every age group and at every educational level, more than six in ten agree that the newspaper is helpful to shoppers and consumers. This high degree of approval, given widespread negative stereotypes of advertising, suggests that the newspaper is a special kind of advertising medium. This report will explore some aspects of that special quality.

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1) In this survey, through a sequence of questions about newspaper reading, 15% of all adults contacted indicated that they do not read newspapers "even once in awhile". The questions on which this report is based were not asked of this group. Some questions were asked of only one-half of the respondents, using either of two versions (A and B) of the basic interview schedule. The unweighted bases for all newspaper readers and for those in the split-halves of the sample are shown in the Appendix.

2) Higher proportions of women than men also said that they would like the same amount of advertising (55%, vs 43% for men) or more advertising (11% vs 6% for men) in the Sunday newspaper.

Table 1

"The paper helps me to decide where to shop and buy."

| | Agree: Total | Strongly | Somewhat | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Version B readers | 71% | 35% | 36% | 24% |
| By sex: | | | | |
| Men | 63% | 26% | 37% | 32% |
| Women | 79 | 44 | 35 | 18 |
| By age: | | | | |
| 18-24 years | 75% | 26% | 49% | 25% |
| 25-34 years | 71 | 35 | 36 | 24 |
| 35-44 years | 64 | 36 | 28 | 31 |
| 45-54 years | 71 | 32 | 39 | 24 |
| 55-64 years | 75 | 39 | 36 | 21 |
| 65 years or older | 78 | 44 | 34 | 18 |
| By education: | | | | |
| Some high school or less | 78% | 47% | 31% | 17% |
| High school graduate | 71 | 38 | 33 | 24 |
| 1-3 years college | 70 | 25 | 45 | 28 |
| College graduate | 67 | 32 | 35 | 31 |
| By household income: | | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 76% | 40% | 36% | 19% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 79 | 44 | 35 | 18 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 70 | 39 | 31 | 26 |
| $40,000 and over | 62 | 28 | 34 | 34 |
| By employment status: | | | | |
| Total employed | 67% | 30% | 37% | 29% |
| Working women | 78 | 40 | 38 | 20 |
| Total not employed | 78 | 43 | 35 | 17 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 71% | 35% | 36% | 26% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 71 | 36 | 35 | 22 |
| By circulation of newspaper read: | | | | |
| Under 50,000 | 73% | 43% | 30% | 25% |
| 50,000 - 250,000 | 73 | 35 | 38 | 24 |
| 250,000 and over | 70 | 27 | 43 | 26 |

Question: Please tell me if you agree or disagree that (this statement) applies to you personally. (IF AGREE: Would you say you agree strongly, or only somewhat, that it applies to you?) - VERSION B

Consumers Rate the Importance of Newspaper vs. TV Advertising

The newspaper readers surveyed were also asked about the relative importance of the newspaper and television in their role as "a consumer or shopper". Although it is reasonable to assume that respondents relate this question mainly to advertising, some might also associate it with editorial or program content.

In either case, responses to the question heavily favor newspapers: 65% of the sample said the newspaper is more important, while 15% said that television is more important and 13% called the two media equally important in this respect. The highest proportions rating the newspaper more important than TV as a medium for consumers and shoppers are found among: women, adults over 35 years of age, those with college backgrounds, those with household incomes of $25,000 or more, and regular daily newspaper readers (Table 2). These groups might be characterized as the best customers and prospects for many products and services.

The newspaper's commanding lead over television in the context of shopping and buying probably results from a combination of factors, including the ease of accessing information in the newspaper, greater detail on prices and product features, a wider range of advertised goods and services (for easy comparisons), and other advantages inherent in a time-sensitive print medium, such as couponing.

Table 2

Newspaper vs. TV: Medium More Important to Respondent as Consumer and Shopper

| | More Important | | | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Newspaper | Television | Equal | No Answer |
| Total Version A readers | 65% | 15% | 13% | 7% |
| By sex: | | | | |
| Men | 57% | 19% | 14% | 10% |
| Women | 72 | 12 | 11 | 5 |
| By age: | | | | |
| 18-24 years | 46% | 27% | 19% | 8% |
| 25-34 years | 61 | 22 | 8 | 9 |
| 35-44 years | 67 | 16 | 12 | 5 |
| 45-54 years | 68 | 10 | [illegible] | 7 |
| 55-64 years | 72 | 11 | 8 | 9 |
| 65 years or older | 73 | 4 | 14 | 9 |
| By education: | | | | |
| Some high school or less | 63% | 14% | 16% | 7% |
| High school graduate | 61 | 16 | 15 | 8 |
| 1-3 years college | 68 | 17 | 6 | 9 |
| College graduate | 72 | 15 | 11 | 2 |
| By household income: | | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 61% | 21% | 10% | 8% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 69 | 16 | 8 | 7 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 73 | 14 | 5 | 8 |
| $40,000 and over | 70 | 15 | 13 | 2 |
| By employment status: | | | | |
| Total employed | 64% | 17% | 12% | 7% |
| Working women | 73 | 13 | 10 | 4 |
| Total not employed | 65 | 13 | 14 | 8 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 73% | 8% | 12% | 7% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 53 | 25 | 14 | 8 |
| By circulation of newspaper read: | | | | |
| Under 50,000 | 70% | 12% | 13% | 5% |
| 50,000 - 250,000 | 64 | 18 | 11 | 7 |
| 250,000 and over | 67 | 13 | 16 | 4 |

Question: Which of the two media--newspapers or TV--is more important to you as a consumer or shopper? - VERSION A

Page Opening by Type of Section

The daily newspaper's sections allow people to read in a more purposeful way; at the same time, sections can also promote browsing. Pages with all types of editorial content stand a good chance of being opened.[1] As past research has shown, the main news section ranks very high: 80% of the pages in this section are opened. An almost identical level of page opening is found for its editorial and op-ed pages (Table 3).

Several types of newspaper sections show very different levels of page opening for men and women. Among male readers, 71% of sports section pages are opened but only 47% among women readers. Conversely, the figures for food pages are 30% for men vs. 69% for women. However, the male-female difference in the proportion opening the business section pages is smaller (59% for men, 52% for women) perhaps because so many women now pursue active working careers.

The themed environments found in a typical daily newspaper represent unique opportunities for those advertisers who must direct their messages to target audiences rather than to consumers in general. To a greater extent than any other medium, the sections of the daily newspaper provide varied environments at a local level that closely match the customer profiles for different kinds of retail stores, products and services.

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1) A full description of the sampling procedures and interviewing guidelines used to measure page opening is contained in the technical report prepared by Response Analysis Corporation, which conducted the study.

Table 3

Daily Newspaper Page Opening by Type of Section

| | Percent Opening Page: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Adults | Men | Women |
| Main news section | 80% | 77% | 82% |
| Editorial, op-ed, letters, columns | 80 | 81 | 80 |
| Other news (area, region, local) | 75 | 71 | 79 |
| Other features: fashion, science, travel[a] | 72 | 66 | 78 |
| Lifestyle, women, home | 68 | 61 | 78 |
| Entertainment, TV, movies | 60 | 57 | 63 |
| Sports | 59 | 71 | 47 |
| Business, finance | 56 | 59 | 52 |
| Food | 53 | 30 | 69 |
| Classified section[b] | 39 | 40 | 37 |
| Average percent of pages opened | 67% | 66% | 69% |

a) These dissimilar sections have been combined to compensate for small bases.

b) Spreads consisting entirely of classified advertising are excluded from the average for consistency with earlier page-opening research, which did not include measures for such spreads. They are shown here for comparative purposes.

Page Opening: Reaching Potential Customers

The prime responsibility of any advertising medium is to give advertisers the opportunity of reaching their customers. Before newspaper readers can read and act on a particular ad, they must open to the page, or spread, on which the ad appears. To measure page opening, respondents who reported reading a "yesterday" newspaper included in the interviewer's kit were taken through a copy of the paper and asked about a sample of six randomly selected spreads.[1]

On average, two thirds (67%) of the newspaper pages in readers' hands will be opened. A majority of the pages will be opened regardless of the reader's age, sex, race, education or income level (Table 4).

Differences found in the proportion of pages opened by readers in different segments can reflect factors other than demographics. For example, older adults are somewhat more likely than young adults to live in non-metropolitan areas where newspapers have fewer pages. However, other data in this survey indicate that young adults are also more selective in their newspaper reading habits than older adults are.

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1) The randomly selected pages in this survey included spreads that consisted entirely of classified advertising. However, the average page-opening figure and other findings in this report (except where specifically noted) exclude such spreads in order to make the results comparable to earlier research on page opening.

Table 4

Daily Newspaper Page Opening by Demographics of Readers

| | Total Readers | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percent of pages opened: | 67% | 66% | 68% |
| By age: | | | |
| 18-34 years | 60% | 62% | 58% |
| 35-54 years | 67 | 64 | 70 |
| 55 years or older | 74 | 72 | 76 |
| By race: | | | |
| White | 69% | 68% | 70% |
| Black | 56 | 57 | 55 |
| All other | 67 | 68 | 67 |
| By education: | | | |
| Some high school or less | 70% | 71% | 68% |
| High school graduate | 69 | 65 | 73 |
| 1-3 years college | 67 | 67 | 67 |
| College graduate | 64 | 65 | 62 |
| By household income: | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 69% | 73% | 66% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 72 | 75 | 69 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 66 | 62 | 70 |
| $40,000 and over | 61 | 61 | 62 |

How Does the Size of the Daily Paper Affect Page Opening?

This 1987 survey confirms earlier research on page opening, which showed that the percentage of pages opened tends to decrease as a newspaper grows fatter.[1] In papers having ten to thirty-two pages, 78% of the pages are opened, on average, as compared with 63% of the pages in papers with eighty-one to two-hundred-four pages (Table 5).

In part, this is because the fattest daily newspapers contain more pages and sections with specialized content designed to appeal to particular groups within the total newspaper audience. However, the typical reader is interested in many different topics. Estimates of the number of pages opened show that readers of the fattest newspapers open to many more pages than the thinnest newspapers contain (Table 5).[2]

Page opening figures for dailies in different circulation-size groups show a similar pattern because small-circulation newspapers are much thinner, on average, than large-circulation newspapers. In newspapers with less than 25,000 circulation, 71% of the pages are opened, on average. For newspapers with over 250,000 circulation, the comparable figure is 63% (Table 6). Over the past few years American newspapers have grown fatter. An average daily paper read by a respondent in this 1987 survey contained seventy pages (median).

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1) For example, see "Newspaper Pages, Ads and Readers", Newspaper Advertising Bureau, May 1984.
2) Compare with "Meeting Readers' Multiple Needs", Newspaper Advertising Bureau, March 1984, page 18.

Table 5

Page Opening by Number of Pages in Daily Newspaper

| Size Categories* | Average # Pages | Percent Opened | Estimated # Pages Opened |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 to 32 pages in newspaper | 21 | 78% | 16 |
| 33 to 48 pages in newspaper | 40 | 68 | 27 |
| 49 to 80 pages in newspaper | 56 | 69 | 39 |
| 81 to 204 pages in newspaper | 120 | 63 | 76 |

* The total number of pages counted in newspapers in each category included all-classified pages.

Table 6

Page Opening by Circulation of Daily Newspaper

| | Percent of Pages Opened: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Adults | Men | Women |
| Under 25,000 | 75% | 71% | 78% |
| 25,000 - 50,000 | 78 | 79 | 77 |
| 50,000 - 100,000 | 69 | 65 | 72 |
| 100,000 - 250,000 | 65 | 64 | 65 |
| 250,000 and over | 63 | 63 | 63 |

How Does Location Within the Paper Affect Page Opening?

If the proportion of daily newspaper pages opened is somewhat higher for thin papers than for fat papers, are spreads near the front page more likely to be opened than pages near the back? In a national survey, it is not possible to develop figures for specific spreads (say, pages 22 and 23) because the number of pages in individual dailies read by respondents varies so greatly. Nevertheless, it is possible to look at the effect of a page's relative position within the newspaper (Table 7).

As Table 7 shows, the front page is the most widely seen of all pages. This is consistent with the importance that readers attach to hard news and with the finding that the most common way of reading the paper is to start with the front page.

The randomly selected interior spread nearest the front has a 77% chance of being opened, as compared with 53% for the spread nearest the back. This difference reflects not only the thickness of the major metro dailies (which disproportionately affects these results), but also the fact that more specialized material (e.g., stock market quotations) can usually be found in the back pages of most daily newspapers.

Table 7

Daily Newspaper Page Opening by Location of Page in Newspaper

| | Adults | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|---|
| Front page of paper | 97% | 97% | 96% |
| Average interior spread[a] | 68% | 67% | 68% |
| First interior spread | 77 | 74 | 81 |
| Second interior spread | 71 | 70 | 73 |
| Third interior spread | 64 | 65 | 64 |
| Fourth interior spread | 66 | 66 | 66 |
| Fifth interior spread | 56 | 57 | 54 |
| Sixth interior spread | 53 | 59 | 44 |
| Front page of section | 66% | 62% | 71% |
| Back page of section | 60% | 57% | 63% |

a) "First interior spread" does not refer to pages 2 and 3 of the newspaper. Page opening measures were obtained on a random sample of pages in newspapers read yesterday that were also included in the interviewer's kit. Therefore, "first interior spread" denotes the spread nearest the front page that was randomly selected for a particular interview. Similarly, "second interior spread" is the one located after that, based on its selection from a table of randomized numbers that took into account the day of the week and the paper's overall size (number of pages).

Display Advertising Gets As Much Exposure as Editorial Content

A tabulation of page opening by the type of advertising found on the page shows virtually identical figures for all-editorial pages and those that include ROP display advertising. Both types of pages are opened by two out of three readers, both men and women (Table 8).

Table 8

Daily Newspaper Page Opening by Presence of ROP Display Advertising

| | Adults | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|---|
| No advertising (all-editorial)[a] | 67% | 67% | 68% |
| Display advertising and editorial | 67 | 66 | 69 |

a) Does not include front page of newspaper.

In contrast, the odds are about four out of ten (39%) that a page or spread consisting entirely of classified advertising will be opened. As will be shown later in this report, most reading of classified advertising is purposeful, which means that readers who turn to the classified pages have a pre-established interest in the products or services advertised. This may be particularly true for readers of large-circulation newspapers which contain several classified sections.

Additional data on page opening by population of metro area, newspaper cycle, and time spent reading are shown in tables A4 through A6 in the Appendix.

Newspaper Advertising Selects Its Own Audience

In this research a card-sorting task that included 13 kinds of news, 12 kinds of features and 5 kinds of advertising was used to assess readers' preferences for various categories of newspaper content. Data from this part of the survey confirm other research findings[1] that demonstrate the targeted appeal of newspaper advertising.

The major attraction of a particular newspaper ad is the pertinent information it contains about products and services that readers themselves use. Although creativity and esthetic merit are important, reader involvement with newspaper advertising is usually product-related.

This important point is clearly reflected in Table 9. For example, the figures in this table show that women are much more likely to read clothing ads and supermarket ads than they are to read the average news item or feature. And women are more faithful readers of ads than men are, with the exception of the real estate classified category.[2]

Table 10 provides additional details on the kinds of newspaper advertising usually read by key demographic segments. For example, adults under 25 years of age have a higher than average level of interest in movie ads and help wanted classified.

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1) See "How Newspaper Ads Select Customers' Revisited", Newspaper Advertising Bureau, April 1987.

2) Respondents were not asked about some "male interest" categories of advertising (e.g., automobiles).

Table 9

Kinds of Daily Newspaper Items and Advertising "Usually Read"

| | Total Readers | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average (mean): 13 kinds of news items[a] | 62% | 66% | 59% |
| Average (mean): 12 kinds of features[a] | 49 | 43 | 55 |
| Supermarket ads | 58 | 40 | 73 |
| Store ads for clothing | 57 | 40 | 73 |
| Movie ads | 50 | 47 | 53 |
| Help wanted classified | 43 | 42 | 44 |
| Real estate classified | 31 | 34 | 28 |
| Unweighted base: Total newspaper readers | (1,717) | (703) | (1,014) |

Question: Each of these cards contains a different kind of news, feature or advertising item appearing in most daily newspapers. Please look through them and put to one side the kinds of things you don't usually read or look at.

a) To place these averages in perspective, it might be noted that the proportion of news items usually read ranged from 84% (for "news about the local community") to 46% (for "business and financial news"). Comparable figures for features ranged from 60% (for "TV program listings") to 26% (for "crossword puzzle").

Table 10

Kinds of Daily Newspaper Advertising "Usually Read"

| | Supermkt Ads | Clothing Ads | Movie Ads | Help Wanted | Real Estate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total newspaper readers | 58% | 57% | 50% | 43% | 31% |
| By sex: | | | | | |
| Men | 40% | 40% | 47% | 42% | 34% |
| Women | 73 | 73 | 53 | 44 | 28 |
| By age: | | | | | |
| 18-24 years | 44% | 59% | 76% | 55% | 24% |
| 25-34 years | 58 | 60 | 65 | 54 | 34 |
| 35-44 years | 56 | 57 | 55 | 47 | 36 |
| 45-54 years | 56 | 59 | 38 | 42 | 32 |
| 55-64 years | 62 | 53 | 30 | 33 | 33 |
| 65 years or older | 69 | 53 | 24 | 22 | 24 |
| By education: | | | | | |
| Some high school or less | 69% | 60% | 39% | 44% | 29% |
| High school graduate | 62 | 59 | 49 | 46 | 32 |
| 1-3 years college | 52 | 55 | 57 | 42 | 29 |
| College graduate | 45 | 55 | 54 | 40 | 32 |
| By household income: | | | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 68% | 59% | 55% | 51% | 28% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 64 | 61 | 50 | 50 | 29 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 53 | 59 | 50 | 45 | 33 |
| $40,000 and over | 45 | 56 | 54 | 39 | 34 |
| By employment status: | | | | | |
| Total employed | 49% | 54% | 53% | 45% | 35% |
| Working women | 70 | 75 | 61 | 47 | 30 |
| Total not employed | 67 | 58 | 42 | 39 | 27 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | | | |
| Read 4 to 5 days | 58% | 59% | 48% | 40% | 31% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 57 | 55 | 53 | 47 | 30 |
| By circulation of newspaper read: | | | | | |
| Under 25,000 | 67% | 61% | 47% | 51% | 34% |
| 25,000 - 50,000 | 63 | 68 | 55 | 55 | 39 |
| 50,000 - 100,000 | 57 | 53 | 52 | 48 | 27 |
| 100,000 - 250,000 | 55 | 55 | 48 | 36 | 26 |
| 250,000 and over | 54 | 56 | 53 | 36 | 32 |

Sunday Advertising Inserts Are Well Read

When Sunday newspaper readers were asked how often they read the special advertising inserts in Sunday editions, a total of 72% indicated that they read Sunday inserts either "regularly" (46%) or "now and then" (26%). As with most other types of newspaper advertising, women are the most faithful readers of Sunday inserts; eight in ten women read them, compared with six in ten men (Table 11). Nor does employment dull women shoppers' interest in Sunday inserts--readership is just as high among working women as among those who aren't gainfully employed.

Other demographic variations in levels of Sunday insert readership are less striking than these male-female difference. For example, respondents with household incomes under $15,000 and those with incomes of $40,000 and over are equally likely to read inserts, as are regular and occasional readers of daily newspapers. However, readership may be above average in the 25-to-34 year age group, when many are moving to new homes or starting families, and the time and money that Sunday inserts can save them have added advantages.

Table 11

Readership of Advertising Inserts in Sunday Newspaper

| | Total Reading | Read Regularly | Look at Now & Then |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Sunday newspaper readers | 72% | 46% | 26% |
| By sex: | | | |
| Men | 62% | 34% | 28% |
| Women | 81 | 57 | 24 |
| By age: | | | |
| 18-24 years | 69% | 43% | 26% |
| 25-34 years | 78 | 49 | 29 |
| 35-44 years | 75 | 51 | 24 |
| 45-54 years | 72 | 48 | 24 |
| 55-64 years | 61 | 39 | 22 |
| 65 years or older | 69 | 41 | 28 |
| By education: | | | |
| Some high school or less | 72% | 47% | 28% |
| High school graduate | 72 | 49 | 23 |
| 1-3 years college | 74 | 44 | 30 |
| College graduate | 68 | 42 | 26 |
| By household income: | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 72% | 47% | 25% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 73 | 48 | 25 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 72 | 47 | 25 |
| $40,000 and over | 72 | 46 | 26 |
| By employment status: | | | |
| Total employed | 72% | 45% | 27% |
| Working women | 81 | 57 | 24 |
| Total not employed | 71 | 47 | 24 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 72% | 46% | 26% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 71 | 45 | 26 |
| By circulation of newspaper read: | | | |
| Under 25,000 | 69% | 45% | 24% |
| 25,000 - 50,000 | 77 | 51 | 26 |
| 50,000 - 100,000 | 75 | 49 | 26 |
| 100,000 - 250,000 | 70 | 48 | 22 |
| 250,000 and over | 66 | 37 | 29 |

Question: For each section, please tell me whether you read it regularly, look at it now and then, or whether you put it aside without looking at it.

All Kinds of Readers Clip Coupons

One-half of the readers (Version A) were asked a question on coupon clipping. Overall, 56% of the sample reported clipping coupons from a newspaper within "the past three months or so". The proportion of coupon clippers was highest among women (71%), reflecting the fact that the principal food shopper in most households is a woman. For men, the comparable figure is 40% (Table 12).

The finding that four out of ten men have recently clipped coupons may be something of a surprise. Women have traditionally been regarded as the sole or primary users of cents-off coupons; in fact, research companies often limit questions about coupon use to female homemakers. This study did not include a question on the number of coupons clipped; women are more important among "heavy" coupon clippers and users.

Table 12

Percentage Clipping Coupons Within Past Three Months

| | Clipped Coupons | Did Not Clip Coupons | Don't Know, No Answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Version A readers | 56% | 41% | 3% |
| By sex: | | | |
| Men | 40% | 57% | 3% |
| Women | 71 | 26 | 3 |
| By age: | | | |
| 18-24 years | 42% | 54% | 4% |
| 25-34 years | 57 | 40 | 3 |
| 35-44 years | 52 | 45 | 3 |
| 45-54 years | 59 | 39 | 2 |
| 55-64 years | 61 | 35 | 4 |
| 65 years or older | 61 | 35 | 4 |
| By education: | | | |
| Some high school or less | 64% | 32% | 4% |
| High school graduate | 57 | 40 | 3 |
| 1-3 years college | 53 | 45 | 2 |
| College graduate | 49 | 49 | 2 |
| By household income: | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 58% | 40% | 2% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 62 | 35 | 3 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 53 | 45 | 2 |
| $40,000 and over | 53 | 46 | 1 |
| By employment status: | | | |
| Total employed | 51% | 47% | 2% |
| Working women | 67 | 31 | 3 |
| Total not employed | 63 | 33 | 4 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 56% | 42% | 2% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 55 | 40 | 5 |
| By circulation of newspaper read: | | | |
| Under 50,000 | 57% | 41% | 2% |
| 50,000 - 250,000 | 62 | 37 | 1 |
| 250,000 and over | 49 | 49 | 2 |

Question: Have you clipped any coupons from a newspaper in the past three months or so? - VERSION A

Classified Readership in Weekday and Sunday Editions

In response to questions in Version B of the questionnaire, 38% of the sample reported that in the past week they had looked at classified advertising in the daily newspaper, while 31% had seen classified ads in the past week's Sunday edition (Table 13).[1]

Taken at face value, this would mean that during a typical week, about 40 million people see classified advertising in the daily paper, while over 34 million see classified ads on Sunday. However, earlier research[2] that probed the readership of specific classified categories in newspapers read yesterday suggests that respondents in the present survey underestimated their readership of types of classified advertising for both weekdays and Sundays.

In general, however, the classified readership patterns found among various demographic segments are consistent with those seen in past research on classified. In particular, readership is highest among adults under 45 years of age and shows a sharp drop after age 65. This is because the major categories of classified advertising--automotive, employment, and real estate--are more closely tied to the basic needs of younger adults.

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1) It should be kept in mind that most daily newspapers have five or six weekday editions but only one Sunday edition.

2) For example, see "A National Study of Classified Advertising Readership and Prospect Status," Newspaper Advertising Bureau, 1980.

Table 13

Percentage Reading Classified Advertising in Past Week

| | Any Weekday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|
| Total Version B readers | 38% | 31% |
| By sex: | | |
| Men | 39% | 31% |
| Women | 36 | 30 |
| By age: | | |
| 18-24 years | 43% | 30% |
| 25-34 years | 46 | 37 |
| 35-44 years | 42 | 35 |
| 45-54 years | 34 | 28 |
| 55-64 years | 41 | 39 |
| 65 years or older | 14 | 8 |
| By education: | | |
| Some high school or less | 37% | 26% |
| High school graduate | 42 | 34 |
| 1-3 years college | 37 | 28 |
| College graduate | 33 | 31 |
| By household income: | | |
| Under $15,000 | 46% | 28% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 40 | 31 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 36 | 35 |
| $40,000 and over | 43 | 39 |
| By employment status: | | |
| Total employed | 40% | 34% |
| Working women | 38 | 34 |
| Total not employed | 35 | 25 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 43% | 35% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 31 | 24 |
| By circulation of newspaper read: | | |
| Under 50,000 | 50% | 39% |
| 50,000 - 250,000 | 32 | 27 |
| 250,000 and over | 33 | 27 |

Question: Did you look at classified ads for homes, jobs, cars, or other things in the daily paper at any time during the past week? Did you look at any classified ads for homes, jobs, cars, or other things in last week's Sunday paper? - VERSION B

Classified: The Advertising People Actively Seek

The main thrust of classified advertising from its very beginnings has been to help people locate goods and services that satisfy some of their most basic needs. Classified is perhaps the most selective of all advertising and therefore least in need of attention-getting gimmicks.

The basic character of classified is reflected in the finding that about two thirds of those looking at classified in the past week (66% of weekday readers, 69% of Sunday readers) report that they were "looking specifically for a certain kind of ad" (Tables 14 and 15).

Purposeful searches of the weekday or Sunday paper's classified pages appear to be most common among men, those under 35 years of age, occasional readers of the daily or Sunday newspaper, and those with college backgrounds.[1]

Although most readership of classified is purposeful, one third of recent readers of classified ads report that they were looking at pages on which classified advertising "happened to be located". Earlier research (cited on page 23) showed that these browsers can be an important source of business for classified advertisers.

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1) The questions discussed in this section were asked of only a subset of Version B respondents. Some bases are small and relatively unstable; the bases are shown in tables 14 and 15.

Table 14

Weekday Classified: Purposeful vs. Chance Reading

| | Unwtd. Base | Looked for Specific Ads | Happened to See Ads |
|---|---|---|---|
| Daily classified readers (Version B) | 308 | 66% | 33% |
| By sex: | | | |
| Men | 130 | 70% | 28% |
| Women | 178 | 61 | 39 |
| By age: | | | |
| 18-34 years | 128 | 71% | 28% |
| 35-54 years | 116 | 69 | 31 |
| 55 years or older | 64 | 43 | 54 |
| By education: | | | |
| Some high school or less | 62 | 60% | 38% |
| High school graduate | 124 | 61 | 37 |
| 1-3 years college | 69 | 68 | 32 |
| College graduate | 51 | 78 | 22 |
| By household income: | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 96 | 65% | 33% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 58 | 54 | 43 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 56 | 74 | 26 |
| $40,000 and over | 72 | 71 | 29 |
| By employment status: | | | |
| Total employed | 191 | 69% | 31% |
| Working women | 97 | 59 | 41 |
| Total not employed | 115 | 60 | 38 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 207 | 62% | 37% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 101 | 74 | 26 |
| By circulation of newspaper read: | | | |
| Under 50,000 | 139 | 66% | 33% |
| 50,000 - 250,000 | 106 | 65 | 33 |
| 250,000 and over | 59 | 67 | 33 |

Question: Were you looking specifically for a certain kind of ad, or were you just looking at some pages on which those classified ads happened to be located? - VERSION B

* Some rows do not total 100% because "don't know" and "no answer" have been excluded (1% of total). Because of small bases, some demographic subgroups (e.g., ages 35-44 years and 45-54 years) have been combined.

Table 15

Sunday Classified: Purposeful vs. Chance Reading

| | Unwtd. Base | Looked for Specific Ads | Happened to See Ads |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday classified readers (Version B) | 227 | 69% | 31% |
| By sex: | | | |
| Men | 102 | 67 | 33 |
| Women | 125 | 71 | 29 |
| By age: | | | |
| 18-34 years | 88 | 81% | 19% |
| 35-54 years | 89 | 67 | 33 |
| 55 years or older | 50 | 44 | 56 |
| By education: | | | |
| Some high school or less | 40 | 49% | 51% |
| High school graduate | 94 | 76 | 24 |
| 1-3 years college | 47 | 70 | 30 |
| College graduate | 44 | 70 | 30 |
| By household income: | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 57 | 67% | 33% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 42 | 63 | 37 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 56 | 74 | 26 |
| $40,000 and over | 72 | 71 | 29 |
| By employment status: | | | |
| Total employed | 152 | 72% | 28% |
| Working women | 75 | 73 | 27 |
| Total not employed | 74 | 61 | 39 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 149 | 65% | 35% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 78 | 78 | 22 |
| By circulation of newspaper read:* | | | |
| Under 50,000 | 90 | 65% | 35% |
| 50,000 - 250,000 | 82 | 70 | 30 |
| 250,000 and over | 53 | 73 | 27 |

Question: Were you looking specifically for a certain kind of ad, or were you just looking at some pages on which those classified ads happened to be located? - VERSION B

* This category refers to the daily newspaper read, which may not be the same as the Sunday edition read. Because of small bases, circulation groups have been combined.

Are They More Likely to Read the Weekday or Sunday Classified?

When Version B respondents were asked whether they were more likely to look at the daily or Sunday paper for classified ads, 52% opted for the Sunday paper and 27% for the daily paper; 6% volunteered the information that they would look at both (Table 16).

Responses to this question may simply attest to an awareness of existing conditions, namely, that in most newspapers, the Sunday editions carry more classified advertising by far than weekday editions do. This in turn suggests that those with an interest in any specific category of classified advertising want access to the largest possible pool of ads. Since the three leading classifications involve major personal decisions, it is hardly surprising that people looking for a job, a new home, or a car seek the widest range of choices.

Preference for the Sunday paper runs highest among adults under 35 years of age, people with college backgrounds, those who are employed, and those with household incomes over $40,000, as well as readers of dailies with circulations of 50,000 and over. Only in the case of readers of the smallest papers (which are also the least likely to publish a Sunday edition) does the daily win out over the Sunday paper for its classifieds.

Table 16

Likelihood of Reading Classified in Daily vs Sunday Paper

| | More Likely to Read: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Daily | Sunday | Both |
| Total Version B readers* | 27% | 52% | 6% |
| By sex: | | | |
| Men | 24% | 53% | 7% |
| Women | 30 | 51 | 5 |
| By age: | | | |
| 18-24 years | 29% | 61% | 8% |
| 25-34 years | 23 | 59 | 3 |
| 35-44 years | 29 | 54 | 4 |
| 45-54 years | 29 | 57 | 5 |
| 55-64 years | 24 | 42 | 16 |
| 65 years or older | 29 | 33 | 3 |
| By education: | | | |
| Some high school or less | 32% | 43% | 7% |
| High school graduate | 31 | 46 | 7 |
| 1-3 years college | 20 | 66 | 3 |
| College graduate | 23 | 55 | 5 |
| By household income: | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 38% | 41% | 6% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 28 | 54 | 5 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 27 | 51 | 5 |
| $40,000 and over | 25 | 59 | 6 |
| Employment status: | | | |
| Total employed | 26% | 58% | 6% |
| Working women | 28 | 57 | 5 |
| Total not employed | 29 | 42 | 5 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 30% | 50% | 6% |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 23 | 55 | 6 |
| By circulation of daily newspaper read: | | | |
| Under 50,000 | 43% | 38% | 4% |
| 50,000 - 250,000 | 21 | 59 | 6 |
| 250,000 and over | 14 | 65 | 7 |

Question: Which of the two--the daily paper or the Sunday paper--are you more likely to look at for its classified ads? - VERSION B

* Rows do not total 100% because "neither" (2% of total responses) and "don't know"/"no answer" (13% of total) are not shown.

Overview

The basic thrust of this report has been to show the status of the daily newspaper as a unique advertising medium. Seven out of ten members of the public find the newspaper helpful in their shopping and buying decisions. Women, who are more frequent purchasers of a large range of items, also reveal the most positive attitudes toward newspaper advertising.

As past research has shown, newspaper advertising often triggers product interest and reader action. When people want to know where to buy and how much they will have to pay, the newspaper is the medium they turn to. Newspaper advertising also simplifies comparison shopping.

The daily newspaper offers excellent opportunities for advertising exposure--two thirds of the pages on which ROP display advertising appears are opened. In addition, a typical newspaper provides a number of themed environments that segment the overall audience into groups that represent the most desirable prospects for many categories of products and services.

Other advertising values delivered by newspapers are represented by the readership of classified advertising, clipping of newspaper coupons, and readership of advertising inserts in the Sunday paper.

# APPENDIX

Table A1

Respondent Bases

| | Newspaper Readers | Non-Readers* | Total Adults* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total sample (unweighted) | 1,717 | 332 | 2,049 |
| By sex: | | | |
| Total men | 703 | 133 | 836 |
| Total women | 1,014 | 199 | 1,213 |
| By age: | | | |
| 18-24 years | 150 | 126 | 176 |
| 25-34 years | 370 | 70 | 440 |
| 35-44 years | 359 | 58 | 417 |
| 45-54 years | 236 | 37 | 273 |
| 55-64 years | 232 | 45 | 277 |
| 65 years or older | 370 | 96 | 466 |
| By education: | | | |
| Some high school or less | 376 | 152 | 528 |
| High school graduate | 629 | 108 | 737 |
| 1-3 years college | 361 | 38 | 399 |
| College graduate | 330 | 24 | 354 |
| By household income: | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 443 | 149 | 592 |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 340 | 51 | 391 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 312 | 29 | 341 |
| $40,000 and over | 318 | 26 | 344 |
| By employment status: | | | |
| Total employed | 980 | 146 | 1,126 |
| Working women | 499 | 65 | 564 |
| Total not employed | 728 | 184 | 912 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 987 | 0 | 987 |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 730 | 0 | 730 |
| By circulation of newspaper read: | | | |
| Under 25,000 | 262 | 0 | 262 |
| 25,000 - 50,000 | 316 | 0 | 316 |
| 50,000 - 100,000 | 198 | 0 | 198 |
| 100,000 - 250,000 | 454 | 0 | 454 |
| 250,000 and over | 407 | 0 | 407 |

* Shown for completeness only. None of the tables in the report refer to these two groups. Numbers are unweighted respondents; all percentages are based on weighted numbers of respondents.

Table A2

Respondent Bases

| | Total Version A Readers | Total Version B Readers | Version B Sunday Readers |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total sample (unweighted) | 843 | 874 | 776 |
| By sex: | | | |
| Total men | 340 | 363 | 325 |
| Total women | 503 | 511 | 451 |
| By age: | | | |
| 18-24 years | 74 | 76 | 64 |
| 25-34 years | 164 | 206 | 183 |
| 35-44 years | 174 | 185 | 169 |
| 45-54 years | 112 | 124 | 112 |
| 55-64 years | 121 | 111 | 99 |
| 65 years or older | 198 | 172 | 149 |
| By education: | | | |
| Some high school or less | 186 | 188 | 152 |
| High school graduate | 307 | 321 | 289 |
| 1-3 years college | 170 | 188 | 171 |
| College graduate | 161 | 168 | 155 |
| By household income: | | | |
| Under $15,000 | 214 | 229 | 193 |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 169 | 171 | 150 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 156 | 156 | 137 |
| $40,000 and over | 140 | 178 | 164 |
| By employment status: | | | |
| Total employed | 475 | 505 | 456 |
| Working women | 240 | 257 | 230 |
| Total not employed | 360 | 364 | 315 |
| By frequency of daily reading: | | | |
| Read 4-5 days | 476 | 511 | 468 |
| Read 3 days or fewer | 367 | 363 | 308 |
| By circulation of daily read: | | | |
| Under 25,000 | 125 | 137 | 108 |
| 25,000 - 50,000 | 160 | 156 | 141 |
| 50,000 - 100,000 | 100 | 98 | 89 |
| 100,000 - 250,000 | 215 | 239 | 220 |
| 250,000 and over | 201 | 206 | 193 |

Table A3

Page Opening Bases

| | Including All-Classified | Excluding All-Classified |
|---|---|---|
| Total pages (unweighted) | 10,352 | 8,698 |
| By sex of reader: | | |
| Men | 4,457 | 3,752 |
| Women | 5,895 | 4,946 |
| By education of reader: | | |
| Some high school or less | 2,022 | 1,696 |
| High school graduate | 3,602 | 3,034 |
| 1-3 years college | 2,195 | 1,834 |
| College graduate | 2,401 | 2,025 |
| By household income of reader: | | |
| Under $15,000 | 2,189 | 1,867 |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 1,889 | 1,589 |
| $25,000 - $39,999 | 2,023 | 1,713 |
| $40,000 and over | 2,367 | 1,981 |
| By number of pages in paper | | |
| 10-32 pages | 3,042 | 2,658 |
| 33-48 pages | 2,623 | 2,194 |
| 49-80 pages | 2,573 | 2,099 |
| 81-204 pages | 2,114 | 1,747 |
| By location within paper: | | |
| Front page of paper | 172 | 171 |
| First interior spread | 1,766 | 1,744 |
| Second interior spread | 1,768 | 1,667 |
| Third interior spread | 1,754 | 1,474 |
| Fourth interior spread | 1,646 | 1,167 |
| Fifth interior spread | 1,228 | 761 |
| Sixth interior spread | 612 | 411 |
| Front page of section | 619 | 590 |
| Back page of section | 618 | 573 |

Table A4

Page Opening by Population of Metropolitan Area

| | Total Pages* | Page Opening |
|---|---|---|
| Metropolitan area: | | |
| One million and over | 3,971 | 65% |
| 250,000 - 999,999 | 2,685 | 69% |
| 50,000 - 249,999 | 5,577 | 78% |
| Non-metropolitan area | 2,151 | 67% |

Table A5

Page Opening by Newspaper Cycle

| | Total Pages* | Page Opening |
|---|---|---|
| Morning | 5,987 | 66% |
| Evening | 3,701 | 70% |
| All day | 664 | 65% |

* Unweighted base.

Table A6

Page Opening by Time Spent Reading[a]

| Time spent reading: | Page Opening |
|---|---|
| 29 minutes or less | 55% |
| 30 - 44 minutes | 63% |
| 45 - 59 minutes | 68% |
| 60 - 74 minutes | 73% |
| 75 minutes or more | 87% |

a) Based on qualified readers who read only one daily newspaper yesterday.